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An Enquiry into the Condition of Criminal Offenders in England and Wales, with respect to Education; or, Statistics of Education among the Criminal and General Population of England and other Countries. By RAWSON W. RAWSON, Esq., Honorary Secretary to the Statistical Society of London.

[Read before the Statistical Society of London, 21st December, 1840.]

At the meeting of the British Association at Birmingham in 1839, I brought before the Statistical Section an Analysis of the Tables of Criminal Offenders in England and Wales, with reference more particularly to the influence which sex and age appear to exercise upon the commission of crime, and the peculiarities which exhibit themselves in different districts with regard to the nature of the offences committed, and the sex and age of the offenders. This paper was subsequently published in the Journal of this Society.* There remained one important point upon which information is afforded in the annual Criminal Tables, which was deferred for future investigation, *viz.*, the degree of instruction possessed by the offenders; and the result of my examination into this branch of the subject I now propose to bring before the Society.

Since the year 1835, the degree of instruction possessed by criminal offenders in England and Wales, has been recorded in the annual tables. It was introduced, I believe, at the instance of Mr. Porter, who took his idea, and the form of classification, from the French criminal tables, in which, as well as in the Belgian tables, the same information has been annually published since the year 1828. It is the result of the information afforded by the English returns, compared with those of the other parts of the United Kingdom and of other countries, which I am about to investigate.

In discussing the question of the influence which education exerts in the repression of crime, much misapprehension and error have arisen from a confusion of terms,—from treating mere instruction in the elementary arts of reading and writing as education; and the good or evil effects of the former have been frequently used as arguments in favour, or in detraction, of the latter. As the validity of the conclusions resulting from the present enquiry, rests upon the broad distinction between instruction and education, their difference must be rightly understood, and kept constantly in mind. Education may be said to consist of that moral, combined with intellectual, training, by which the mind is taught to discern, and the heart is led to feel, the great object for which man is created, and the duties which he is called upon to fulfil in this stage of his existence. Instruction, in its broadest and complete sense, is merely the intellectual training, by means of which the mind acquires the power of discerning and correctly appreciating things and persons, and the faculty of reasoning upon the facts observed. There is, also, a narrower meaning frequently ascribed to the term “instruction,” by which it is limited to an initiation in the arts of reading and writing, &c. It is obvious that in either of these senses instruction is insufficient of itself to repress criminal passions, which are not the result of any action of the mind, but spring from the secret impulses of the heart. It does not

* See vol. ii. p. 316.

pretend to such power, nor do its advocates lay claim to it on its behalf. This is the high attribute of education, of which instruction is merely a handmaid—an instrument, as it were, to prepare the mind for the reception of the seed which education is about to sow.

But further, instruction does not necessarily imply the inculcation of knowledge calculated to give a right direction to the energies of the mind. It may make a man learned, but not of necessity good; it may store the head with knowledge, and brace the mind for the greatest exertions; but may leave its possessor ignorant of the nature or of the value of virtue. It is true, that in general it is not applied to such purposes—it is seldom now that the improvement of the heart is not the professed aim of instruction; but it too frequently happens, that the means used fall short of the intended purpose, or even tend to false and dangerous consequences. For these reasons, it is a question how far the degree of instruction possessed by an individual may be taken as evidence of the amount of education which he has received. Applied to single cases it would certainly not hold good; for such instruction may have been imparted without any reference to religion, which is the only sound basis of education, or without the recommendation of a single virtue, the acquisition of which is the proper end of all education; while, on the other hand, moral discipline, the most precious fruit of education, may have been acquired by oral communication, without an acquaintance with the usual instruments of knowledge. But these cases are rare, more particularly the latter, and may therefore be treated as exceptions. On the one hand, elementary instruction is usually so applied as to inculcate moral doctrines; the books used commonly relate in some degree to religious subjects, and the sentiments prominently put forward and encouraged are usually of a nature to suggest virtuous principles, and to promote the cultivation of moral and useful habits. On the other hand, although virtuous principles are often inculcated by other instruments than reading and writing, they are seldom acquired without the assistance of those instruments, and no great progress can be made in the acquisition of those principles, before a desire is awakened to possess a knowledge of the means best adapted for their attainment and improvement. In dealing, therefore, with a large number of cases, in which the extremes on either side usually balance one another, it seems that the amount of instruction possessed by a multitude may, on the whole, be taken as evidence of the amount of moral education which they have received; not, indeed, as certain evidence, but as the best which can at present be obtained, and as an approximation generally worthy of credit.* It must also be taken into consideration, that whatever imperfection exists in the test affects all parts equally, and therefore it does not invalidate any

* The Reports of the Chaplains of the Lewes and Preston gaols, noticed on a former occasion (*Journal* vol. ii., p. 442), furnish remarkable testimony in support of this proposition. Out of 846 prisoners at Lewes, only 8 could read and write well; and these alone, out of the whole number, were acquainted with Christian Doctrine. 54 others were acquainted with the history of the Saviour; of these 49 could read well. Out of 541 who were either wholly ignorant, or could only read imperfectly, not more than 5 were acquainted with the history of the Saviour. At Preston, out of 270 offenders, 9 could read and write well; while 11 were well-instructed upon religious subjects.

comparison drawn between classes possessing different degrees of *instruction*. Having thus explained the real nature of the evidence afforded by the Criminal Tables, and the extent to which it may be employed in investigating the connexion between crime and ignorance, I shall proceed to the examination of the results of the tables.

The first year in which the degree of instruction was noted was 1835, but as the classification then adopted was changed in the following year, the results cannot be blended with those of the subsequent period. In that year the offenders were divided into three classes :—

- 1st. Those who could neither read nor write.
- 2nd. „ „ read only.
- 3rd. „ „ read and write.

In the following year four classes were distinguished, *viz.*—

- 1st. Those who could neither read nor write.
- 2nd. „ „ read and write imperfectly.
- 3rd. „ „ read and write well.
- 4th. „ who had received a superior degree of instruction.

The tables for the subsequent four years, from 1836 to 1839, have been framed upon this arrangement, and the results which I am about to bring forward, have been drawn from the whole, or from the greater part, of this period.

In each year there is a small proportion of the offenders whose instruction cannot be ascertained. It amounted, on the average of the last four years, to rather more than 2 per cent. ($2\frac{1}{3}$) of the total number of offenders, and the numbers of which it is composed have been altogether excluded from the following computations.

The first subject for enquiry is the proportion of individuals who compose each of the four classes above described. In calculating the proportions for each year separately, in order to ascertain the amount of variation in different years, I found, that in 1836, the number of offenders reported to possess a superior degree of instruction was so disproportionately great, compared with any of the subsequent years, being twice as great as in 1837, and three times as great as in either of the following years, that there appears strong ground for believing, that in this year the parties making the returns were not sufficiently versed in the method of the new classification, and included a considerable number among the well-instructed, whom, in subsequent years, they would have ranked in a lower class. For this reason I have excluded the year 1836 from some of the computations, and have taken the three years from 1837 to 1839, which appear to embrace a sufficiently long period, and an adequate number of cases, to afford a fair average. In these three years 69,517 persons, of both sexes, were committed for trial, or 23,172 annually. Of this annual average—

- 8,201 could neither read nor write.
- 12,567 „ read and write imperfectly.
- 2,318 „ read and write well.
- 86 had acquired a superior degree of instruction.

The per-centage proportions of these numbers are respectively as follows :—

- 35.4 could neither read nor write.
- 54.2 „ read and write imperfectly.
- 10.0 „ read and write well.
- .4 had acquired a superior degree of instruction.

The variations in the proportions during the three years were very small, not having exceeded $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in any class; and the class of superior instruction having only decreased from 4 in 1,000 in 1837 to 3 in 1,000 in the two following years. In 1836 it was 9 in 1,000.

Thus, on the average of the triennial period, out of 100 persons charged with criminal offences, 35 were wholly destitute of instruction, not being able either to write or read; and 54 possessed the lowest degree of elementary instruction, being able to read and write imperfectly. It is not unfair to presume, that the whole of this latter class, whatever may have been the oral instruction, the exhortations, or the example of their parents—and how few in the class to which the majority of criminals belong ever possess such advantages!—had not received that amount of instruction which would be worthy of the title of education, or which, by the nature of the lessons conveyed, or by the direction given to the thoughts, could have had any permanent good influence upon their minds. These two classes, therefore, or nearly 90 in 100, may be placed together as persons wholly destitute of moral instruction, and almost destitute of the elementary knowledge by the aid of which it might be acquired. The third class had advanced a step further; they could read and write well; but it does not necessarily follow that they had received such an amount of intellectual instruction, or had attained such a degree of self-knowledge, as would serve to dispel the darkness of ignorance, and enable them to acquire a control over their thoughts and actions. Less than this falls short of education. Still the individuals composing this class stand in a far better position than those in the preceding two—they possess the key to knowledge; and it may be presumed, that the general direction of their studies had tended to inculcate lessons of moderation and virtue, and therefore this class cannot assert the plea of ignorance in extenuation of their criminality. They cannot, however, be called an educated class, nor can education be justly charged with inefficiency to restrain crime, because a number, however great, of half-educated persons figure in the tables of criminals. No system or institution can be taxed with incompetency, because it fails to produce its intended effect without a sufficient trial, or before it has had time to develop and apply its resources. There remains, therefore, only the fourth class, who have received an instruction beyond that afforded by mere elementary tuition, and of whom consequently it may be said, that education has failed to deter them from the commission of crime—and these amount to 86 in a year, or, proportionately, to 4 in 1,000.

It cannot surely be averred, that this number presents the same proportion which the well-educated classes bear to the whole community. It must be remembered, that scarcely any of the criminals included in these tables are under 10 years of age, and therefore in a comparison with the general population, the number under that age must be excluded. Will it then be said, that the proportion of 4 bears the same ratio to the total number of well-educated persons in this country above the age of 10, that 996 bears to the total number of ignorant and ill-instructed; or, applying these proportions to the existing population of England and Wales, that out of the 11,000,000 persons above the age of 10, only 44,000 are well educated, or possess that amount of educa-

tion which is sufficient to arm them against the impulses of passion and the allurements of vice?

Or will it be asserted, on the other hand, that the vices and crimes of the educated escape detection and punishment—that the fraudulent and vicious practices, in which the higher and better educated classes indulge, do not appear in the criminal courts, but become the subject of enquiry in the civil courts, or are glossed over to avoid the scandal of publicity? This argument does not hold good, because it is incontestably true, that a much larger amount of vice and criminality escapes detection in the lower classes of society than even exists among the upper classes. What proportion do the fraudulent agents, the dishonest bankrupts, the extortioners and cheats in the higher classes, bear to the professional thieves, the receivers of stolen goods, the impostors, and vagabonds who escape detection among the lower classes? Are not debauchery, intemperance, profaneness, and irreligion, those parents and associates of crime, more frequent and more gross among the lowest and most ignorant classes, than among the upper and better educated? Where shall we look among the higher classes in the metropolis for a body of habitual violators of the law, to compare with the 15,000 persons of depraved character registered within the district of the Metropolitan Police, as being known to depend for their subsistence upon acts of depredation and immorality?*

Neither of these arguments will hold good; it follows, therefore, upon the evidence of these tables, that the proportion of criminal offenders among the educated portions of society, is very much less than that which is found among the ill-instructed and ignorant. It may, however, be urged that education prevails chiefly among the rich, who have not the same temptations to criminality as the poor. This argument applies almost exclusively to one class of crimes, of which the desire of gain is the motive, and of which the poor may allege that distress or want are the immediate causes. But there is abundant evidence to prove that *want* is not the usual instigator to crime even among the poor. One numerical proof, and the evidence of one competent witness, will be sufficient, on the present occasion, to establish this point. Out of 1,000 prisoners confined in the gaol at Preston, Mr. Clay, the chaplain, ascertained from the individuals themselves, that only 76 were induced by *want* to commit the crimes for which they were imprisoned.† It might have been supposed that many would have been inclined to hide the true cause of their delinquencies, and to attribute them to poverty and distress; but the whole number who pleaded this excuse was 76 out of 1,000 cases. Mr. Clay shews, that intoxication—in itself a vice—is by far the most prevailing cause of crime, as 455 out of the 1,000 cases were immediately attributable to this single vice, and this is confirmed by the Inspector of Prisons for Scotland, whose wide experience adds great weight to his testimony, that “of all the immediate causes of crime and offences in Scotland, drunkenness is by far the most potent.” But there is this further reply, that the poor, whenever they acquire a good education, almost invariably rise above poverty, and that it is the want of education which disqualifies the great mass of the people from emerging from abject poverty, and keeps them in that state of wretchedness which

* First Report of the Constabulary Force Commissioners, p. 13.

† Journal of the Statistical Society of London, vol. i. p. 124.

debases their minds, destroys their sense of right and wrong, and drives them into acts of dishonesty and crime, for the purpose generally of gratifying their depraved desires. It is true, that "the poor shall never cease out of the land;" but poverty is not of necessity allied with depravity: many of the poorest communities and nations are the freest from vice, and it will be a subject well worthy of statistical investigation, to shew how in various nations vice and crime have progressed with the advance of wealth and luxury, where this material progress has not been accompanied with a corresponding advance in mental enlightenment and religious instruction.

The results exhibited by the English tables are confirmed by the experience of every country from which we have similar information; and it will be interesting to observe the partial differences, which may be supposed to mark the relative degree of instruction possessed by the general population of each. But previously to drawing this comparison, it may be well to shew that the returns do exhibit that degree of instruction, at least relatively in different districts, by adducing evidence that the offenders committed for trial are, for the greatest part, drawn from the neighbourhood of the court before which they are brought, and that a very small portion consists of the floating population. In rural districts, where the population is stationary, and there is not the same inducement to immigration as in the towns, it scarcely admits of a doubt, and all experience proves, that the majority of the offenders apprehended consists of residents. The rural districts do not afford the same opportunities or the same temptations to an itinerant criminal population as the towns, in which wealth is accumulated, and property of a portable and easily convertible nature is more exposed. But I shall be enabled to shew that in towns by far the greater proportion of crimes are committed by persons residing in them, or in the immediate neighbourhood. The Rev. Mr. Clay, whose reports have already been quoted, shews the previous residence of the prisoners committed to the gaol at Preston; and from his last two reports, it appears that of the whole number committed, 85 per cent. belonged to the immediate neighbourhood, and 8 per cent. more to the rest of the county, leaving only 7 per cent. as the whole of the floating criminal population committed to trial. In some towns which are great thoroughfares, as Liverpool, Bristol, Birmingham, Croydon, &c.; or places of fluctuating population, as Brighton, Bath, or Cheltenham, this proportion will be greater, but nevertheless on the average of town and country in different counties, it will not probably be much affected.

It has been shewn that in England and Wales out of 100 offenders—

Per Cent.

35·4 could neither read nor write.

54·2 „ read and write imperfectly.

10·0 „ read and write well.

·4 had received a superior degree of instruction.

In Scotland, out of 8,907 offenders who were tried in the three years from 1836 to 1838—

Per Cent.

20·2 could neither read nor write.

59·2 „ read and write imperfectly.

18·2 „ read and write well.

2·4 had received a superior degree of instruction.

Here, then, the proportion of the wholly uninstructed is nearly one-half of that which exists in England, and the proportion of the class who are able to read and write well is nearly double, while that of the educated is six times as great; proving that instruction is much more general, and is usually carried further, in Scotland than in England.

In Ireland, on the other hand, the proportions are reversed. Unfortunately the classification is different in that country, as the form which was at first introduced, and subsequently abandoned, in England, has been there adopted and maintained. Hence it is impossible to draw an exact comparison between Ireland and Scotland, or between the results of equal periods in Ireland and England; but in order to institute as close a comparison as possible, I will contrast the results of the triennial period from 1836 to 1838 in Ireland, with the single year 1835 in England, when the classification was the same in both countries.

In Ireland.	In England.
Per Cent.	Per Cent.
46·1	35·0 could neither read nor write.
21·1	21·4 „ read only.
32·8	43·6 „ read and write.

Thus while the class who could only read bore the same proportion in both countries, the other two classes were exactly reversed. One-third more could read and write in England than in Ireland, and one-third less were wholly uninstructed.

The only comparison which can be instituted with Scotland, is between the proportions of those who can neither read nor write; and the result is, that in Ireland 46·1 per cent., or nearly one half, belong to that class, while in Scotland the proportion is only 20·2 per cent., or one-fifth.

Before proceeding to examine the relative condition of other countries, it may be well to enquire how far these results agree with what is known respecting the state of instruction among the general population of this kingdom. It is to be regretted, that in the British Isles, no such test of public instruction exists as that provided in Norway by the law, which requires that every inhabitant shall possess a certain amount of instruction before he can be confirmed; and further enacts that he cannot enter into any trade, or possess the rights of a citizen, until he is confirmed. In the absence of any such test, the only information which exists, as to the amount of instruction possessed by any large number of persons in England, is that afforded by the tables under examination, which applies only to criminal offenders, and by the table contained in the Second Report of the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths and Marriages, which is just published, relative to the mode of signature used by persons contracting marriage. But this table refers to writing only. However, from this it appears that out of 141,083 couples who were married in the year ended 30th June, 1839, 41 per cent. signed with a mark, being unable to write their own names, or being so ill able to write, that through shame or nervousness they declined exposing their incapacity. I shall have occasion presently to shew the great difference which exists between the two sexes, as regards the degree of instruction prevailing among them respectively. The same fact is

shewn by the Registrar-General with regard to signatures of parties marrying; for while the average of the two sexes who subscribed with marks, was 41 per cent., that of males alone was 33 per cent., and of females alone 49 per cent. There can be no doubt that a considerable portion of these are able to read, at least well enough to entitle them to be placed in the class of those who can read or write imperfectly. If, therefore, one-third be abstracted from the above proportion on this account, there will remain 22 per cent., or say 25 per cent. or one-quarter, of the adult male population who can neither read nor write. But the proportion of male criminals (excluding the females in order to render the comparison equal) who can neither read nor write is 34·4 per cent, or one-half greater than the above proportion, which is another proof that ignorance prevails to more than the average extent among criminals. Some allowance, however, must be made for the number of juvenile offenders who swell the list of criminals, and among whom a relatively greater proportion of the wholly uninstructed may be expected to be found, than among the older offenders; but this difference will not much affect the average, as the proportion of juvenile offenders to the whole number is comparatively small, and some returns to which I shall presently call attention, with the reports upon the Parkhurst Reformatory for juvenile offenders, shew that the proportion of wholly uninstructed persons is not so widely different among those under and above 17 years of age, as to have much influence on the above proportion.

There exists, also, some other evidence with regard to the prevalent amount of instruction, which, although not of so extensive a nature, is worthy of notice in this place. Enquiries have been made by various Statistical Societies and other bodies, into the state of instruction prevailing among the adult portion of the working classes in various parts of the country. These enquiries having been confined exclusively to the lower classes, the results must of course fall greatly below the average of the population. On the other hand, as the information depends upon the authority of the parties examined, there may have been a tendency on the part of some to pretend to a knowledge which they did not actually possess, although the agents employed state that in general they had no reason to doubt the truth of the statements which they received. At all events the amount of this exaggeration can by no means equal the deficiency caused by the total exclusion of the higher and middling classes. The following are some of the principal results.

In Manchester and Salford,* out of 169,223 persons of all ages—

87,185,	or	51·5	per cent.	could	neither	read	nor	write.
82,038	,,	48·5	,,		read	and	write.	

And if the children under 10 years of age, who amount to one-fourth of the population, be excluded, 21 per cent. could neither read nor write.

In Bury,* out of 14,322 persons of all ages—

5,834,	or	40·7	per cent.	could	neither	read	nor	write.
4,579	,,	32·0	,,		read	only.		
3,909	,,	27·3	,,		read	and	write.	

And if the children under 10 years of age be deducted, 15·7 per cent. could neither read nor write.

* Separate Reports of the Statistical Society of Manchester.

In Dukinfield, Staly Bridge, and Ashton,* out of 41,882 persons of all ages—

19,661,	or 46·9 per cent.	could neither read nor write.
10,634	,, 25·4	,, read only.
11,587	,, 27·7	,, read and write.

Of those above 10 years of age, 21·9 per cent. could neither read nor write.

In Bristol,† out of nearly 10,000 (9,861) adults—

2,216,	or 22·5 per cent.	could neither read nor write.
2,523	,, 25·6	,, read only.
5,122	,, 51·9	,, read and write.

In Pendleton,‡ out of 4,743 adults—

906,	or 19·1 per cent.	could neither read nor write.
1,826	,, 38·5	,, read only.
2,011	,, 42·4	,, read and write.
1,309	,, 28·	,, cipher.

In the same‡ place, out of 1,479 youths from 10 to 21—

400,	or 27·	per cent. could not read nor write, or could barely read.
551	,, 37·3	,, read only.
528	,, 35·7	,, read and write.

In two small parishes in Rutlandshire§ containing 483 adults—

Only 38,	or 8 per cent.	could neither read nor write.
151	,, 31	,, read only.
294	,, 61	,, read and write.

In a wretched part of the parish of Marylebone,|| in London, out of 1,044 adults—

25 per cent.	could neither read nor write.
75	,, read, or read and write.

In two other portions of the same parish, inhabited principally by Irish labourers and their families, out of 1,244 adults¶—

49 per cent.	could neither read nor write.
41	,, read, or read and write.

Among 1,022 able-bodied and temporarily disabled paupers, above the age of 16, the inmates of several Union workhouses in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Kent, whose attainments were ascertained with precision**—

46·5 per cent.	could neither read nor write.
18·	,, read imperfectly.
30·2	,, read decently.
5·3	,, read in a superior manner.
66·4	,, not write.
15·4	,, write imperfectly.
16·9	,, write decently.
1·3	,, write well.

From these statements, which are all that I have been able to procure,††

* Separate Report of the Statistical Society of Manchester.

† Journal of the Statistical Society of London, vol. ii. p. 372.

‡ Ibid., vol. ii. p. 80.

§ Ibid., vol. ii. p. 302.

|| First publication of the Central Society of Education, p. 340.

¶ Athenæum, 1837, No. 498, and MSS.

** Second publication of the Central Society of Education, p. 262.

†† In the Supplementary Report of the Factories Inquiry Commission, (p. 42) printed by the House of Commons in 1834, there is a statement of the amount of instruction possessed by a large body of operatives in the factories of the United Kingdom; but as a considerable proportion of that class consists of children, the results cannot be used in the present comparison, which refers only to adults.

it will be seen that, with the exception of the two last cases, which do not fairly enter into the comparison—as in one, the parties were paupers, and may therefore be supposed to be below the average of the labouring classes, and a large proportion of them were, moreover, disabled, while in the other they were chiefly Irish immigrants—the results generally confirm the evidence afforded by the Table of signatures in the Registrar-General's Report, *viz.*, that about one-third of the adult male population of England cannot write even their names, and that from one-fifth to one-fourth cannot write or read, even in the most imperfect manner.

There is, however, no means of ascertaining what is the proportion of those who, although able to sign their names more or less legibly, and to read, or rather to spell through a dozen lines in as many minutes, have not advanced beyond the most limited stage of instruction, and are wholly unable to derive either pleasure or profit from their acquirements; but it is greatly to be feared that it is very much larger than that of the wholly ignorant class, and this, after all, is the question as regards education—not whether a man by dint of spelling letter by letter, can make out the direction on a sign-post or the address of a letter, or that he shall be able to sign a receipt for his wages, or register the birth of his child—but whether he has sufficient instruction to enable him to understand what he reads—to allow scope to the imagination and the memory while he reads—and to apply the information obtained by study to the practical purpose of self-improvement.

The Chaplain of the Parkhurst Reformatory furnishes some valuable evidence upon this point, in his last Report.* He shews that out of 157 prisoners, 85 could read more or less perfectly, but only 58 had any useful knowledge of meanings, and 42 any information from general meaning. The following is the statement which he gives of the mental state of those offenders:—

Digest of Acquirements.		Knowledge of Meanings.		Information from General Reading.		Knowledge of Scripture.	
Read well . . .	5	Some . . .	24	Some . . .	25	Considerable. .	14
„ tolerably . .	26	A little . . .	34	A little . . .	17	Some . . .	25
„ imperfectly .	54	Very little . .	19	None . . .	90	A little . . .	25
„ scarcely at all	34	Scarcely any or	80	Forgotten . .	25	Scarcely any or	93
„ not at all .	38	none . . .				none . . .	
Total . . .	157	Total . .	157	Total . .	157	Total . .	157

He remarks that “very few, perhaps not more than 12 or 13 in all, *sufficiently* understood what they read to render the operation easy and pleasant to themselves. The mind appeared so much absorbed in the mechanical process of recognising signs and uttering sounds, as to be unequal to the intellectual efforts necessary for considering *the sense*. The subject may thus, therefore, be summed up:—Of those that have attended day-schools for more than a year together, not half can enter into the meaning of the words they use.” The same holds good with regard to adults. Mere reading then is not enough. The ability to read is useful for many purposes of life, and as such, is the first important step in instruction; but if carried no further, it can produce no

* Presented to Parliament, Sess. 1840, p. 23.

effect either upon the mind or heart, nor possess a much higher value than any art by which a man can earn his livelihood. The threshold of education is the power to read with ease; the first step on crossing it is the power of understanding and applying what has been read.

With respect to Scotland and Ireland, I do not know of any similar information by which the prevalent degree of instruction can be ascertained. The returns from the factories alluded to in a preceding note, indicate a much higher degree of instruction in Scotland than in England; as in the former country, out of 29,486 operatives, 95·8 per cent. could read, and 53 per cent. could write, while in the latter, out of 50,497 operatives, only 86 per cent. could read, and 43 per cent. could write. The numbers for Ireland are too small to admit of any conclusive inference. I therefore turn to France, in which country a very satisfactory means of comparison with the general population exists, through the annual Conscription, which embraces a large number of youths above the age of 18, taken from all classes throughout the kingdom. These are subject to an examination as to their scholastic attainments; and in 1836 it was found that 50·5 per cent., or exactly one-half, could neither read nor write. This is a very much larger proportion than in England, where only 33 per cent. were unable to write, and about 25 per cent. could not read; but it is considerably smaller than it was a few years ago in France, for in the three years from 1827 to 1829, 62 per cent. of the conscripts were unable to read and write.* From this it would appear that a great impulse has lately been given to national instruction in France. With regard to the criminal population of that country, it appears, from the result of 7 years, ending with 1834, in which 50,338 persons were brought before the tribunals,† that—

Per Cent.

60·3 could neither read nor write.

27·7 ,, read and write imperfectly.

9·8 ,, ,, well.

2·2 possessed superior instruction.

The contrast with England is remarkable, and will be the more striking when the fact which I noticed last year is taken into consideration, that less than 2 per cent. of the offenders in France are under 16 years of age, among whom instruction is below the average, while in England 12 per cent. are under that age.‡ In France 60 criminals out of 100, and in England 35 out of 100, could neither read nor write; in France 28, and in England 54, out of 100 could read and write imperfectly, shewing nearly double the proportion of total ignorance in France, and double the proportion of partial instruction in England. In the third class, in which the parties could read and write well, the proportion was nearly equal in both countries; but the proportion of well educated offenders was nearly four times as great in France as in England. This excess of the educated class in France may arise from a considerable number of political offenders of a superior grade of life, appearing before the courts in that country; while in England such offences are almost unknown, or are confined to persons of an inferior and ignorant class.

* Journal, vol. ii. p. 189.

† First publication of the Central Society of Education, p. 329.

‡ Journal, vol. ii. p. 330.

In Belgium the state of instruction corresponds in a very remarkable manner with that which is found to exist in France, which correspondence, as the circumstances of the two countries and the condition of the population are so similar, affords a strong proof of the correctness of the evidence. Among 36,422 criminal offenders brought before the courts in the five years from 1828 to 1832*—

Per Cent.

60·8 could neither read nor write.

27·1 „ read and write imperfectly.

10·0 „ read and write well.

2·1 had received a superior degree of instruction.

The proportions do not differ more than one-half per cent. in any class from those of France. In Belgium the annual enrolment of the militia offers the same means of ascertaining the state of general education which the conscription affords in France. The result shews that among young men arrived at the age of 18, when they become liable to serve in the militia, the instruction is even below that which prevails among the French conscripts. Of the latter 50·5 per cent. could neither read nor write; of the former 53 per cent. were ignorant to the same degree.†

Thus it is shewn that in England, France, and Belgium, the only countries from which we possess returns enabling us to compare the relative extent of instruction among the criminal offenders and the general population, in all of these, there is an excessive proportion of wholly ignorant persons among the criminal classes.

Very little information exists as to the comparative amount of instruction prevailing among criminals at different ages. There is, however, a table in the Report of the Inspectors of Prisons in England, presented to Parliament last year,‡ in which juvenile offenders under 17 years are distinguished from those above that age. The results as regards males, which I have taken separately for the purpose of a more exact comparison with the previous results, are as follows. Out of 100 criminals imprisoned in England and Wales, including those under summary conviction, in the year 1839—

Under 17.	Above 17.
Per Cent.	Per Cent.
48·3	35·5 could neither read nor write.
21·4	19·2 „ read only.
27·0	37·5 „ read, or write, or both.
3·3	7·8 „ read and write well.

* Statistique comparée de la Criminalité en France, en Belgique, &c. Par Ed. Ducpetiaux, p. 17.

† In the arrondissement of Brussels, the proportion was a little more favourable; but it is generally found that in large towns the standard of instruction is above the average, as will shortly be noticed. In this district, out of 4,161 young men who had attained the age of 18,—

2,143, or 51 per cent.	could neither read nor write.
291 „ 7	„ read only.
819 „ 20	„ read and write.
908 „ 22	„ read, write, and cipher.

Journal, vol. ii. p. 389.

‡ Fourth Report (1839) of Inspectors of Prisons.—Home District, p. 126a.

The difference is very considerable, and tends to throw a still darker hue upon that fearful picture of ignorance exhibited by the educational statistics of the juvenile delinquents with whom our gaols are crowded.

I will now proceed to exhibit some very interesting results, which are obtained from a comparison of the difference existing in the degree of instruction possessed by male and female criminals respectively. In England the proportion of females who—

	Per Cent.		Per Cent.
Could neither read nor write	was 39·8,	while that of males was	34·4
„ read and write imperfectly	„ 55·0	„ „	54·1
„ read and write well . .	„ 5·1	„ „	11·1
Had received superior instruction	„ ·1	„ „	·4

Which shews that the proportion of instructed criminals brought before the courts is twice as great among males as among females, and the proportion of educated males is four times as great.

But this difference is very much greater in Scotland and Ireland. In Scotland the proportions are as follows :—

	Males.	Females.
Could neither read nor write . .	17·1	29·3
„ read and write imperfectly	58·	63·1
„ read and write well . .	21·8	7·3
Had received superior instruction	3·1	·3

Here the proportion of the instructed among the males is 3 times as great as among the females, and the proportion of educated among the males is 10 times as great as among the other sex.

In Ireland the proportion of those who—

	Per Cent.	Per Cent.
Could neither read nor write was, among the males	41·6	females 62·
„ read only	„ 20·4	„ 23·9
„ read and write well	„ 38·8	„ 14·1

Here also the proportion of instruction among the males is 3 times as great as among the females.

If, therefore, it be admitted that the extent of instruction found to exist among criminals is at all indicative of that which prevails among the general population, it follows that although the proportion of instructed persons of both sexes is greater in Scotland than in England or Ireland, as has been before shewn, yet the instruction of females compared with that of males is comparatively less in Scotland and in Ireland than in England.

In seeking for an explanation of this remarkable difference, one important cause may be found in the unequal proportions of male and female children who attend school in the three countries. According to the Returns collected by the London and Manchester Statistical Societies, which embrace 157,652 children, the proportion of the sexes at school was nearly equal,—there were 93 girls to 100 boys; and among the children in the schools of the National Society in England, including daily and Sunday scholars, there were 89 girls to 100 boys.* But in Scotland, according to the Returns made by the ministers of parishes in the year 1834,† there were only 68 girls to 100 boys; and in

* Society's Report for 1837, p. 135.

† Tables of the Revenue, Population, and Commerce, part 6, p. 177.

Ireland, according to the Returns made by the Commissioners of National Education in that country, there were (in 1839) 72 girls to 100 boys.*

From these facts, combined with a comparison between the number of male and female offenders brought to trial in the three countries, another important proof in support of the value of education may be gathered; for it appears that the proportion which the female bear to the male criminals in the three countries—the population of the two sexes remaining always nearly equal,—is exactly in the inverse ratio to the proportion of females at school. In Scotland, where the number at school is the lowest, the proportion of female criminals, compared in the manner I have described, is the greatest, *viz.*, 23·7 in 100, while in Ireland it is 21·5 in 100; and in England and Wales, where the number at school is the highest, the proportion is only 17·2 in 100. There can be no reason for believing that any material difference in the amount of domestic instruction imparted to female children exists in the three countries, and still less for supposing, that in any of the three it exists to an extent worthy of notice among the class to which the majority of criminal offenders belong.

The attention of the Statistical Section at Glasgow was called to the fact exhibited in Captain Miller's paper, read on the first day of that meeting, that the proportion of females apprehended for simple larceny, or petty thefts in Glasgow, was one-half greater than in London or Dublin. This confirms the results which have been above stated.

Before turning to another branch of the enquiry, may we venture to express a hope that the publication of these unexpected results may be the means of calling attention to the subject, and may lead to efforts to verify the truth, and to discover the causes, of the phenomenon. If it be found true, let not Scotland, which has so long boasted of the superior instruction and moral condition of her children, leave the fairest portion of them, the humanisers of the whole, under this disadvantage. It has been shewn that instruction is much more general in Scotland than in England; there can be no reason, in the condition of society in that country, why the female sex should not participate in that advantage to the fullest extent.

The next point for enquiry is the nature of the offences of which the small number of educated persons committed for trial in England and Wales were accused. It will perhaps be most simple and satisfactory to give the actual numbers, and to shew in detail the offences with which they were charged. For this purpose I have thrown together the three years from 1837 to 1839, in order to exclude the year 1836, in which, as I have before stated, the returns appear defective. I have also used the more systematic classification of offences suggested by Mr. Symonds, and adopted in my paper of last year, as I find it impossible to exhibit the spirit and real character of the offences by the method of grouping practised in the official tables. In these three years, therefore, 258 out of 69,517 persons committed for trial in England and Wales, possessed a superior degree of instruction. The

* Annual Report, 1840.

returns do not afford the means of ascertaining the results of their trials, but it may be supposed that the same proportion was condemned as of the other offenders; or that, if there were an excess of acquittals in this class, it would be owing rather to the skill of the counsel who might be engaged by a better class of offenders, or to merely fortuitous circumstances; as there is no reason to believe that educated persons are more liable to wanton and unwarrantable charges than the ill-instructed or wholly ignorant.

Of these 258, 246 were males and 12 were females, being 1 of the latter to 20½ of the former, while upon the average of all females it is 1 to 5; shewing that education has a more powerful influence in preventing females from committing crime than it possesses among males.

Of the 12 females committed—

8	were charged with larceny, one being a servant.
2	„ frauds.
1	„ murder.
1	„ wounding with intent to injure the party.

Of the 246 males committed, 110 were charged with acts of theft of various kinds perpetrated without force, *viz.*—

56	with simple larceny.
25	„ embezzlement.
12	„ theft, being in service.
4	„ horse-stealing.
3	„ stealing from the person.
2	„ stealing letters, by servants of the post-office.
2	„ „ fixtures.
2	„ sheep-stealing.
1	„ poaching for fish.
1	„ stealing in a dwelling-house.
2	„ receiving stolen goods.

45 were charged with malicious offences against the persons of individuals, *viz.*—

22	with assaults.
15	„ manslaughter.
7	„ attempts to maim and injure.
1	„ murder.

33 were charged with attempts at theft by fraud, *viz.*—

19	with forgery of deeds and papers.
14	„ frauds.

21 were charged with offences against the public peace, or the laws of the state, *viz.*—

17	with riots.
2	„ assaults upon officers of the state.
2	„ perjury.

20 were charged with sexual offences, *viz.*—

10	with rape.
4	„ bigamy.
2	„ attempts to procure miscarriage of women.
1	„ an unnatural crime.
1	„ concealing birth of infants.
1	„ exposing the person indecently.
1	„ keeping a disorderly house.

4 were charged with theft by force, *viz.*—

- 2 with housebreaking.
- 1 „ breaking into a shop.
- 1 „ assault with intent to rob.

3 were charged with malicious offences against property, *viz.*—

- 1 with arson.
- 1 „ sending threatening letters.
- 1 „ killing and maiming cattle.

And 10 were charged with other offences not enumerated.

The proportions of these several classes of crime are widely different from those which prevail among criminals of all descriptions, as shewn in my paper already reverted to (vol. ii. pp. 324-5.) The per-centage proportion of well-educated persons charged with—

	Per Cent.		Per Cent.
Theft, without violence.	was 44·3	the average of all criminals was	75·1
Malicious offences against persons „	18·3	„	5·3
Frauds and Forgery.	13·4	„	2·2
Offences against the state, chiefly } riots	8·5	„	6·8
Sexual offences	8·1	„	2·4
Theft, with violence	1·6	„	7·1
Malicious offences against property „	1·2	„	0·6

Thus, it appears that the offences which preponderate among the class of instructed criminals are, malicious offences against persons and property, frauds and forgery, rioting and sexual offences. The offences which, although the most numerous, are proportionately the least prevalent, are thefts without violence. Thefts with violence are also rare, and greatly below the average.

These results are borne out by an examination of the offences with which the next instructed class—of those, namely, who can read and write well,—are charged. This class seems to give evidence, by the nature of their offences, of being in a stage of transition between the ignorant and instructed classes. The differences in the proportion of the several classes of crime remain on the same side as among the educated criminals, but the amount of difference is in every case much smaller. Thus, the proportion of—

	Per Cent.	
Theft, without violence.	was 69·	{ which is nearly equal to the average ratio, while in the educated class the proportion was somewhat more than half of the average.
Malicious offences against persons . „	8·2	{ which is one-half more than the average, but less than one-half of the ratio among the educated.
Frauds	6·2	{ which is three times greater than the average, and only one-half of the ratio among the educated.
Offences against the state	4·7	
Sexual offences	3·6	{ which is one-half greater than the average, but less than one-half of the ratio among the educated.
Theft with violence	3·8	{ which is one-half of the average, while in the educated class it was only one-fourth.
Malicious offences against property . „	0·5	

These results are such as might be expected. Education has less power to restrain the sudden outbreaks of passion, such as anger and lust, than it has to prevent the commission of crimes arising from pre-meditation, and from vices which are the result of the gradual growth of evil desires unrepressed, such as cupidity, &c. On the other hand, forgery, and offences requiring for their execution some degree of intelligence and powers of mental combination, are necessarily peculiar to the instructed classes.

There remains one other point of much interest upon which the criminal tables furnish information, *viz.*, the relative degree of instruction possessed by criminals in the several counties. If it be admitted that the instruction which prevails among criminals is on the whole indicative of that which exists among the general population, and if it has been sufficiently proved that the greater proportion of the criminals belong to the neighbourhood of the place, or at least to the county in which they are tried, it follows that the returns will afford a criterion of the comparative extent of instruction in the different counties. It has been shewn that at Preston only 7 per cent. of the persons committed for trial were strangers to the county. But even if this proportion were generally larger, as it certainly would be in places of great resort or thoroughfare, it is highly probable that the trampers, who form a considerable part of this section, being a more ingenious and enterprising class, of which evidence is given in the First Report of the Constabulary Force Commissioners, would not be below the average in point of instruction. If, however, they be below the average, they are not sufficient in number to affect the large proportion of uninstructed criminals; and, if above, they may raise, but cannot lower the character of the county.

It must be acknowledged that this evidence must be received with caution, and requires corroboration before any positive inferences can be derived from it. I have endeavoured to compare it with the results drawn from the registers of marriages already referred to, and in some respects there is a sufficiently marked coincidence, but not so strong as to warrant implicit confidence in either document as a certain criterion of the state of instruction in the different parts of the country. Nevertheless the comparison must be considered interesting, and when combined with other evidence of the same nature, may lead to significant results. In the first place I shall compare the counties separately, arranging them in two columns, commencing with the extremes of the most and least instructed, and placing in juxtaposition with them the proportion of persons who, according to the Report of the Registrar-General, were unable to sign their names in each. The average of the uninstructed criminals in England and Wales was 89·3 per cent., and the average of persons who signed with a mark was 41 per cent.

From this table it appears that Rutland stands very high according to both accounts, which is further confirmed by the report of the Manchester Statistical Society, from which it appears that the proportion of children at school in the whole county is much higher than in most of the towns which its agent had previously examined, and that in two parishes the proportion of uninstructed adults is unusually small.* If

* Journal, vol. ii. pp. 297-303.

ABOVE THE AVERAGE.				BELOW THE AVERAGE.			
Counties.	Proportion of Criminals		Proportion of Persons who signed with a Mark.	Counties.	Proportion of Criminals		Proportion of Persons who signed with a Mark.
	In-structed.	Un-in-structed.			In-structed.	Un-in-structed.	
Rutland. .	39·	61·	33·	Bedford . .	2·2	97·8	60·
Leiceste . .	22·6	77·4	43·	Durham . .	2·2	97·8	37·
Sussex . .	20·3	79·7	37·	Derby . .	2·6	97·4	41·
Cumberland .	19·	81·	24·	Worcester .	3·5	96·5	55·
Norfolk . .	16·8	83·2	46·	Cornwall . .	4·2	95·8	43·
Westmoreland	16·7	83·3	27·	Essex . .	4·6	95·4	50·
Middlesex .	16·6	83·4	..	Kent . .	4·7	95·3	34·
Stafford . .	15·1	84·9	53·	Shropshire .	5·3	94·7	49·
Surrey . .	13·9	86·1	34·	York . .	6·2	93·8	41·
Somerset . .	13·7	86·3	42·	Bucks . .	6·3	93·7	48·
Suffolk . .	13·4	86·6	49·	Lancaster .	6·4	93·6	54·
Hereford . .	13·3	86·7	40·	Berks . .	6·8	93·2	44·
Devon . .	12·8	87·2	33·	Warwick . .	6·9	93·1	41·
Glamorgan .	12·4	87·6	58·	Dorset . .	7·	93·	30·
Northumber-land . . }	12·1	87·9	29·	Northampton	7·4	92·6	44·
Cambridge .	11·2	88·8	47·	Monmouth .	7·5	92·5	61·
Gloucester .	10·8	89·2	38·	Oxford . .	8·2	91·8	39·
AT THE AVERAGE.				Chester . .	8·4	91·6	43·
Lincoln . .	10·7	89·3	38·	Wilts . .	8·8	91·2	50·
Hants . .	10·7	89·3	34·	Wales . .	9·3	90·7	59·
				Hertford . .	10·1	89·9	55·
				Nottingham .	10·2	89·8	44·
				Huntingdon .	10·6	89·4	51·

it were not for this threefold evidence, some doubt might attach to the single result of the criminal tables, as the number of offenders was small. With regard to Leicester, I am unable to offer any explanation of its favourable position. That of Sussex I conceive to be partly owing to an excess of instructed persons apprehended in Brighton. Both accounts establish a superior degree of instruction in Cumberland and Westmoreland. In Norfolk and Suffolk the evidence is contradictory. In Middlesex the means of comparison do not exist, as the returns of the Registrar-General exhibit the metropolis separate from the county. On the other hand, the principal agricultural counties, particularly those in the south-east of England, Bedford, Berks, Bucks, Essex, Kent, and Oxford, are shewn to be below the average, as are also the two great manufacturing counties of Lancashire and Cheshire. The three mining counties of Durham, Derby, and Cornwall, likewise exhibit a marked deficiency of instructed criminals; they are, however, about the average as regards signatures on marriage. But in what terms shall we mention the fact shewn by this table, that in 3 counties in England only 2 in 100 criminals could read and write well, and that in 7 less than 5 in 100 were so far instructed. The number of criminals in these counties was 8,141; of whom 326, or only 4 in 100, could read and write well.

In the following table the counties are thrown together into the groups adopted by the Registrar-General, which are distributed according to locality; but it must be confessed that the comparison yields few

results, as the two criteria as often contradict as support one another. It confirms, however, the inferences previously noticed.

	Per-centage Proportion			Per-centage Proportion	
	Of Uninstructed Criminals.	Of Persons Signing with Marks.		Of Uninstructed Criminals.	Of Persons Signing with Marks.
Average of England and Wales	89.3	41.	6. <i>Western Counties.</i>		
1. <i>Metropolis</i>	90.6	18.	Gloucester	89.2	38.
2. <i>South-eastern Counties.</i>			Hereford	86.7	40.
Surrey	86.1	34.	Shropshire	94.7	49.
Kent	95.3	34.	Worcester	96.5	55.
Sussex	79.7	37.	Stafford	84.9	53.
Hampshire	89.3	34.	Warwick	94.1	41.
Berks	93.2	44.	Total	91.	47.
Total	89.4	36.	7. <i>North Midland Counties.</i>		
3. <i>South Midland Counties.</i>			Leicester	77.4	43.
Middlesex	83.4	36.	Rutland	61.	33.
Hertford	89.9	55.	Lincoln	89.3	38.
Bucks	93.7	48.	Nottingham	89.8	44.
Oxford	91.8	39.	Derby	97.4	41.
Northampton	92.6	44.	Total	83.	41.
Huntingdon	89.4	51.	8. <i>North-western Counties.</i>		
Bedford	97.8	60.	Cheshire	93.6	48.
Cambridge	88.8	49.	Lancashire	91.6	54.
Total	90.9	48.	Total	92.6	51.
4. <i>Eastern Counties.</i>			9. <i>Yorkshire</i>	93.8	41.
Essex	95.4	50.	10. <i>Northern Counties.</i>		
Norfolk	86.6	49.	Durham	97.8	37.
Suffolk	83.2	46.	Northumberland	87.9	29.
Total	88.4	48.	Cumberland	81.	24.
5. <i>South-western Counties.</i>			Westmoreland	82.3	27.
Wilts	91.2	50.	Total	87.5	31.
Dorset	93.	30.	11. <i>Monmouthshire and Wales.</i>		
Devon	87.2	33.	Monmouth	92.5	61.
Cornwall	95.8	43.	Wales	90.7	59.
Somerset	86.3	42.	Total	91.6	60.
Total	90.7	39.			

The great discrepancy observable in the results for Middlesex and the metropolitan counties may, perhaps, be owing to an excessive proportion of marriages among the higher and middling classes being solemnized in these localities, and partly, it is to be feared, to a diminished proportion of marriages among the lower classes, owing to the facilities for their living together unmarried, without notice and without reproach, in the crowded and neglected alleys of the metropolis and its suburbs. Of the other districts, there appear to be only two in

which the results are so uniform as to merit much reliance, *viz.*, the superior instruction of the four northern counties, and the inferiority of Lancashire and Cheshire.

A comparison of the counties classed according to the prevailing employment of their inhabitants, affords some interesting results, and as the two statements in some measure agree, it will be the more valuable.

				Criminals Uninstructed.	Sign with a Mark.
In the 11 Agricultural counties in the east and south-east				88·9	47·1
6 ,, ,, south and south-west				87·3	37·6
5 ,, ,,				87·4	35·
Average . .				88·1	42·
6 Manufacturing counties in the north				90·7	47·1
4 ,, ,, south-west . .				92·1	48·7
Average . .				91·1	47·8
4 Metropolitan counties				87·1	34·4
Average of the United Kingdom . .				89·3	41·

From this it appears that, by both accounts, the agricultural counties are on an average more advanced than the manufacturing; but that there is a great difference between the agricultural counties in the east and south-east of England, and those in the south and south-west, the former having very slightly the advantage of the manufacturing counties. As this result is contrary to the prevailing opinion upon the subject, it would be most desirable to obtain some further information which might throw light upon its correctness. That it does not hold good in the factories, and is not, in all probability, occasioned by the factory system, is placed almost beyond a doubt by the returns of the state of instruction among the operatives in factories, alluded to at p. 341, from which it would appear that the state of that class, as regards instruction, is unusually favourable. If returns similar to those prepared by Mr. Clay for Preston were published for the whole of the kingdom, we should be enabled to ascertain whether, and to what degree, an excess of Irish criminals in the manufacturing counties contributes to this result. I cannot here forbear calling attention to the great service which Mr. Clay's reports have rendered me in this investigation. Had I possessed similar information upon a more extensive scale, more than one point, which at present remains doubtful for want of sufficient evidence, would have been decided; and other inferences, which I have not attempted to draw on account of that insufficiency of evidence, might have been brought forward and discussed.

The returns of the London and Dublin Metropolitan Police Forces afford some insight into the state of those towns and their suburbs, compared with the whole country. The results are, that in both instances the proportion of instructed persons apprehended is greater in those towns than in the counties in which they are respectively situated; but if the cases of drunkenness and disorderly characters be separated, the proportions among the remainder exhibit very little difference. As the classification of the criminals with respect to instruction is the same in

Dublin as in London, there are the means of a perfect comparison between those two places, which is exhibited in the following statement of the persons tried and convicted in each :—

	London.	Dublin.
Could neither read nor write	41·3 } 90·6	62·5 } 95·1
,, read and write imperfectly.	49·3 }	32·6 }
,, read and write well.	8·4 }	4·5 }
Had acquired a superior degree of instruction	1· }	·4 } 4·9

The comparison is very striking in favour of London. It is found, as might be expected, that the proportion of educated persons among those apprehended for drunkenness is comparatively great. In London the two better classes amounted to 14·7 per cent., and in Dublin to 9·4 per cent.

There is one class of offenders whose miserable mental condition is strongly depicted in these returns, *viz.*, disorderly prostitutes. It differs little in the two capitals. In London only 3, and in Dublin 2·1 in 100 could read and write well; in London only 1, and in Dublin 2 in 1,000 had received a superior degree of instruction. In London 54·1, and in Dublin 74·5 in 100 could neither read nor write; and it is from such as these, bred up in the darkest ignorance, debased by the vilest associations, and exposed to the most bitter trials and temptations, that the law expects and claims orderly habits and decent conduct. Vain hope! Worse than vain,—most short-sighted, legislation, which only provides punishment for the matured offender, without employing any vigorous measures to strike at the root of the evil, and to prevent the growth of the offence.

The examination of the Scotch and Irish counties must be deferred to a future occasion. Before concluding, I will briefly recapitulate the principal results which have been ascertained by the foregoing enquiry.

1st. That only 10·4 in 100 of the criminal offenders committed for trial in England and Wales are able to read and write well, and of these only 4 in 1,000 have received such an amount of instruction as may be entitled to the name of education; and that these proportions are greatly below the average standard of instruction among the general population.

2nd. That these proportions are considerably higher in Scotland, and lower in Ireland; and the evidence appears to establish that the degree of instruction possessed by criminal offenders is an indication of that possessed by the general population in the same districts.

3rd. That about one-third of the adult male population of England cannot sign their own names, and that from one-fifth to one-fourth can neither read nor write.

4th. That these proportions are much more favourable than in France or Belgium, where one-half of the youths at the age of 18 could neither read nor write. The proportion of wholly ignorant criminals in those countries is correspondingly greater than in England.

5th. That in England, instruction is twice as prevalent among male as among female criminals, and one-half more prevalent among males in the general population than among females. That in Scotland and Ireland it is three times as prevalent among the male criminals.

6th. That this unfavourable condition of females in these two countries is further confirmed by the fact that the proportion of female to male criminals is greater than in England, and it may be traced to the circum-

stance of the number of girls at school in those two countries being very small in comparison with the number at school in England. In comparing the three countries, the number of female criminals is found to be exactly in the inverse ratio to the proportion of females at school.

7th. That education has a greater influence among females than among males in restraining them from the commission of crime.

8th. That instruction prevails, upon an average, to a greater extent among the agricultural than among the manufacturing counties of England, but that the agricultural counties in the east, east-midland, and south-east, are greatly below the average.

In the above statements I have confined myself to an investigation of the facts exhibited by the tables under examination. The results I leave to others to apply to the great practical questions connected with this subject, which are agitating the public mind. But I cannot refrain from calling attention to the fact that the evidence adduced most positively refutes the assertion, that education either promotes, or fails to check, the commission of crime. With regard to the restraining influence of instruction the effect is not quite so certain; but it is shewn that the proportion of criminal offenders who were merely instructed was only 1 in 10 out of the whole number. If, however, instruction be insufficient to restrain persons from vice and crime, ignorance is still more inefficient for that purpose. Instruction becomes more and more competent as it is improved. Education, although not always successful, as no human method ever can be, is the most perfect instrument for the attainment of this object. Let those, then, who object to instruction, improve the methods in use, and supply education in its stead; substitute, in fact, the reality for the shadow. Two other objections which have been urged against popular instruction are also overthrown by the above evidence. Whether it be true, or not, that the number of criminal offenders has increased in this and other countries, contemporaneously with the establishment of schools and the extension of the means of instruction—and whether it be true or false, that the proportion of criminal offenders is greatest in districts where instruction is most prevalent—no inference unfavourable to education can be drawn from the affirmation of either proposition, as it has been shewn that it is not by the educated that the mass of offences is committed, but by the ignorant, whom the extension of the system of education has not reached, or by the ill-instructed, with whom the system, through some accident or defect, has not advanced far enough to produce any effect. If, therefore, these propositions be true, which I by no means admit, the causes must be looked for elsewhere, and I believe they may be easily found in circumstances connected with the social, rather than with the moral, condition of communities. But the development of this subject would lead me beyond my present limits, and deserves a special consideration not suited to the present occasion.